



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR
Jodie Kulpa-Eddy

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Christopher Brittan-Powell (Mayor Pro Tem)
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Jason W. Papanikolas

March 7, 2023
Delegate Kumar Barve
Chairman, Environment & Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Re: House Bill 892 – Support

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express our support for House Bill 892 (Senate Bill 813), which would greatly improve the potential for our Town to obtain funding from the State's comprehensive flood management grant program.

Incorporated in 1896, the Town of Berwyn Heights is the sixth oldest municipality in Prince George's County, Maryland. Our nearly 3,300 residents live in 1,050 single family homes on 0.65 square miles within the Capital Beltway. On June 10, 2014, we experienced a flash flood in our Town. The torrential rainfall of 5 inches in less than two hours was a historic event, and the stormwater management systems were not designed for this volume. When the water overloaded stormdrains in the lower levels of town, the water continuing to pour down from the "heights" actually shot up from these low-lying stormdrains like fountains. In a few places, surface water poured into and through backyards where it filled basements like bathtubs. The Berwyn Heights and Branchville Volunteer Fire Departments pulled one man from a basement window who could not otherwise escape from the surging water and, in another instance, saved the lives of two dogs who were crated in a flooded downstairs basement.

The County conducted a hydrologic and hydraulic study in 2015 and concluded that our two largest drainage systems were undersized for 10-year storm events (defined as 5.4 inches of rain in a 24 hour period), much less the 200-year event we experienced. Recommendations were made to improve drainage throughout the town that included: increasing storm drain sizes, rehabilitating pipes, constructing new alignments, and building new inlets and manholes to meet current County criteria. The total construction cost was estimated at around \$10 million. Our Town's combined operating and capital budget is around \$3.5 million annually.

Even as we pursue work with the County to address this situation, the problems continue. On August 10, 2022, our Town was inundated once again with a flash flood after a storm dropped 3+ inches of rain in an hour and residents once again experienced fear, displacement and financial loss.

The changes proposed in HB892/SB813 to the comprehensive flood management grant program will provide Berwyn Heights a greater opportunity to procure much needed funding. For this reason, I respectfully request a favorable report on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jodie Kulpa-Eddy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

Jodie Kulpa-Eddy,
Mayor, Town of Berwyn Heights